

THE GENERAL COUNCIL
Minutes of the General Council Meeting
held by Video Conference Call
on Friday 10th September 2021 from 2.00pm

Present:

Chairman Mr D Lacey (DLa)

Members: Cdr NJW Benstead (NBe)
Mr JPS Bloomfield (JPSB)
Mr N Brasier (NB)
Mr G Burns
Wg Cdr DP Calvert (DCal)
Mr DC Crispin (DCr)
Mr A Dagger (AD)
Mr CES Dickenson (CD)
Mrs A Gran (AG)
Mr J Harris (JH)
Wg Cdr CJ Hockley (CH)
Mr RS Kenchington (RK)
Mr GAE Larcombe (GL)
Mr D Lowe (DL)
Mr M Pountain (MP)
Mr A Reynolds (AR) - Treasurer
Mr B Ritchie
Mrs K Robertson (KR)
Mr T Rylands (TR)
Mr D Stimpson (DS)
Mr IR Thomson (IT)
Mr G Trembath (GTr)
Dr JD Warburton (JWar)
Mr MP Watkins (MW)
Mr S Wallis (SW)
Dr AP Wolpe (AW)

In attendance: Mr A Mercer (AM) - Chief Executive
Mrs G Thatcher (GT) - Secretary to Meeting

Apologies for absence: Mr GK Alexander, Mr HRM Bailie, Mr CM Brooks, Dr AMW Cargill Thompson, Mr PR Coley, Mr M Cottillard, Mr J Harper-Smith, Lt. Col. RG Jeffrey, Mr J Lawrie, Miss SS Lohmann, Mr J Longhurst, Mr N Macfarlane, Mr M Maksimovic, Dr J Marsden, Mr MF Martel, Dr J Martin, Mr FPR Northam, Mr R Roberts, Mr AJD Saunders, Mr R Sayer, Mr I Shirra-Gibb, Mr R Stebbings, Mr C Steele-Benny, Mr N St Aubyn

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The Chairman declared the meeting open and welcomed all members attending. He reminded attendees to keep microphones on mute when not speaking, and to raise hands or use the icons to raise any points throughout the meeting.

1. G671 – APOLOGIES

- 1.1. Apologies were received as noted above.

2. G672 – STANDING REMINDERS

- 2.1. The Chairman reminded the meeting that, following Charity Commission guidelines, the meeting should be cognisant of the distinction between the role of the NRA as the charity, and the NSC as the commercial subsidiary of the Association.
- 2.2. This meeting is held to discuss the role of the NRA as a charity, reminding attendees of the role of the Trustees in terms of the executive authority and decision making on behalf of the charity, and recognising the very valuable work General Council does as an advisory body to the Trustees.
- 2.3. The Chairman requested that all members declare any conflict of interest at the start of the meeting, based on the agenda items. No declarations were made at this time.
- 2.4. The Chairman requested that members declare any conflicts of interest that may arise during the meeting.

3. G673 – MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- 3.1. The approved General Council Conflicts of Interest Policy had been circulated to all GC members and published online.
- 3.2. There were no further matters arising.

4. G674 – REVIEW OF ACTIONS

- 4.1. The Secretary General confirmed that no progress has been made on a draft range operator's guide since the previous meeting due to some challenging summer months, but hopes to make further progress by the end of 2021 and will provide a final draft for approval at the General Council meeting in February 2022. **Item ONGOING.**
- 4.2. MW reported that the Regional Ranges Working Group have met on a couple of occasions and also engaged with Nic Couldrey, Regional Ranges Manager, and have made some good progress in recognising a number of issues facing regional ranges including lead ammunition and noise. The Working Group are looking to create Terms of Reference and Policy Briefing Document which will be circulated to General Council for approval at the next meeting in February 2022. **Item ONGOING.**
- 4.3. BR asked to be involved as the Scotland Regional Rep. MW confirmed that the input of all Regional Reps would be most welcome.

No further questions were raised.

5. G675 – BUSINESS PLANNING & OPERATIONAL UPDATE

- 5.1. The Secretary General's report was circulated prior to the meeting.
- 5.2. The Secretary General gave an update to the report to the meeting:
 - 5.2.1. July and August had been busy with a successful suite of competitions held.
 - 5.2.2. Club affiliation numbers were slightly higher than 2020, but still under 2019's figure.
 - 5.2.3. Individual membership was continuing to increase through the year.
 - 5.2.4. The Training Department is exceptionally busy with courses.
- 5.3. The NSC Chief Executive's report was circulated prior to the meeting.

- 5.4. The Chief Executive gave an update to the report to the meeting:
 - 5.4.1. Both NCSC and BSG have been getting increasingly busier over the past two months and continue to be so.
 - 5.4.2. The return to shooting at the NSC since the Covid lockdown has been very strong.
- 5.5. Both the NRA and NSC continue to face significant challenges through 2021, including ammunition and component costs and increasing staffing levels.
- 5.6. RK informed the meeting that regarding lead in ammunition, he was aware of manufacturers from Europe, including Romania now supplying solid copper bullets to companies such as HPS, and RWS are also considering producing .22RF solid copper ammunition, so this may be useful for consideration as lead free ammunition.
- 5.7. The Chairman remarked that the terminology of lead-free ammunition is going to be very important in the coming years and when lead free ammunition is discussed it means ammunition which does not contain lead, and not necessarily mono-metallic ammunition.
- 5.8. RK also remarked that noise complaints both at Bisley and regional ranges are not helpful and he knows of a range that was shut in the Midlands region because of noise complaints in 2008. RK remarked that .22 long range rim fire shooting makes much less noise and one of the items discussed as part of the Regional Ranges Working Group was the possibility that some regional ranges may only have to be open to .22RF which makes less noise.
- 5.9. The Secretary General thanked RK for the interesting points raised. He added that Regional Commanders on the regional military ranges are also having problems with noise complaints and believes it is largely due to the increased number of people working from home during the week due to the pandemic.

No further questions were raised.

6. G676 – FINANCE

- 6.1. The Treasurer's report to end of July 2021 was circulated prior to the meeting.
- 6.2. The Treasurer highlighted the following:
 - 6.2.1. The performance to end of July is much better than 2020, with a significant operating profit of £378k, driven by increased revenue on range bookings, armoury sales and competition entries, and a consolidated net profit of £417k including the change to restricted asset values.
 - 6.2.2. A budget of £120k is in place for any necessary CAPEX, but all major capital expenditure projects have been put on hold for the remainder of 2021.
 - 6.2.3. The NSC obtained a £95k CBIL loan facility, but it has not been used.
 - 6.2.4. Cash balance, year to date revenue, maintenance expenditure all remain within the limits set by the Trustees.
 - 6.2.5. The Acid Test Ratio remains below the level of 1 times cover agreed by the Trustees.
 - 6.2.6. The Association's finances are ahead of the projected budget amount, and it is not using the overdraft facility currently in place.
 - 6.2.7. JH asked when a full year trading and income from the BSG acquisition will be available.
 - 6.2.8. The Treasurer responded that it would be in the report circulated after BSG's full year of trading, which ended on 6th August 2021, and added that the Trustees have provided the auditors with a justification of the goodwill that is carried on the consolidated balance sheet for the FY2021.
 - 6.2.9. The Chief Executive added that BSG should see a turnover of c.£750k in 2021 and the projected EBITDA is £110-120k, which is in line with forecast projections.

No further questions were raised.

7. G677 – COUNCIL

- 7.1. The Chairman thanked Robert Bruce (Trustee) for producing Council's report to General Council which had been circulated prior to the meeting, and asked the meeting if there were any questions.
- 7.2. RK asked for an update on the release of funds from the Overseas Team Fund (OTF).

- 7.3. The Chairman responded that new Terms of Reference have been produced, taking into account the charitable requirements, and that is being reviewed by the Team Finance Committee. The NRA is optimistic that it will be able to distribute funds from the OTF in alignment with its charitable purposes.
- 7.4. RK asked whether future additions to the OTF are now going into a separate account to avoid the restricted access.
- 7.5. The Chairman responded that the OTF is a restricted fund of the NRA and any monies the NRA raises or receives by way of donation for overseas teams will continue to go into the OTF account and be administered by the NRA. The Chairman added that people are free to set up their own organisations and raise money separately, but that would be completely separate and have no involvement from the NRA.
- 7.6. AD asked how Gallery Rifle funds would be distributed if Gallery Rifle do not meet the charitable status requirements and whether all contributions would be refunded back to the Gallery Rifle discipline.
- 7.7. The Chairman responded that the fund requirements will be reviewed to ensure they meet the charitable status and any issues like the one raised will be addressed, but no assumptions as to the allocation of funds will be made at this time as the Terms of Reference are still in draft.

8. G678 – SHOOTING COMMITTEE

- 8.1. The Shooting Committee report was circulated prior to the meeting:
- 8.2. JSPB asked for an update on Annexe A of the Team Captain's Handbook and what has been recommended to Council:
 - 8.2.1. Under the current procedure, if there was more than one candidate for a TR GB or NRA Team Captain vacancy, a ballot would be held of those General Council members who had registered as Target Rifle shooters. Currently, fewer than half of those people have ever been in a GB team, and even fewer have ever been a GB team captain. In any case, that ballot was not binding and was for the guidance of the Target Rifle Sub-Committee, who made the ultimate decision. The TR Sub-Committee no longer exists, so an alternative selection method has been developed over the last 2 years.
 - 8.2.2. The revised Annex A (the Target Rifle procedure) has been agreed by the Target Rifle members of Shooting Committee and creates an Electoral College to select the best candidate for the captaincy of GB and NRA TR teams. The Electoral College will be made up of all former living GB TR team captains, who are still full members of the NRA and opt in to be part of the Electoral College. There are around 30 potential members.
 - 8.2.3. An enhanced CV format has been produced for all future nominations to assist the Electoral College members in their selection.
 - 8.2.4. JSPB remarked that the previously successful method has been replaced by a different system which removes GC's input into the selection process for GB captains. JSPB added the role of GC over the last 30 years has been very successful with very few unsuccessful teams and wanted it noted that he finds the new method very difficult to justify.

No further questions were raised.

9. G679 – MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

- 9.1. The Membership Committee report was circulated prior to the meeting.
- 9.2. BR asked to be involved in the discussion for Universities in Scotland as the regional rep. AG confirmed she would put BR in touch with GA who is leading the project with the assistance of Richard Stebbings.

No further questions were raised.

10. G680 – ESTATE WORKING GROUP

10.1. The Secretary General informed the meeting that the minutes of the meeting of the Estate Working Group had not yet been received and will be circulated to General Council members once received.

No questions were raised.

11. G681 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1. Election Results

11.1.1. The Chairman informed the meeting that:

11.1.1.1. Trustee on Council election – Nick Brasier has been re-elected as Trustee.

11.1.1.2. Non-Lawyer on the Disciplinary Body – no candidate – election to be re-run.

11.1.1.3. Member of Membership Committee – no candidate elected – vacancy

11.1.1.4. Chairman of Young Shooters Fund – no candidate – election to be re-run.

11.1.2. KR asked for the voting numbers for both elections.

11.1.3. The Chairman confirmed that:

11.1.3.1. Trustee on Council results were 51 ballots sent out, 42 votes were cast, Nick Brasier received 32 votes, and Robert Sayer received 10 votes.

11.1.3.2. Member of Membership Committee results were 51 ballots sent out, 42 votes were cast, 13 in favour of Robert Sayer, 29 against.

11.2. Second Schedule Update Project

11.2.1. AG had circulated a paper to the meeting with suggested changes and amendments received to date.

11.2.2. JSPB remarked that he endorses the recommendations put forward by CB, but wanted it noted again that altering the 2nd schedule can be fraught with difficulties.

11.2.3. CD remarked that he had provided additional comments to AG particularly in areas where the schedule isn't working well.

11.2.4. The Chairman thanked all GC members who have contributed to the project.

11.2.5. JH asked whether GC members should be putting more suggestions forward or discussing the document circulated today.

11.2.6. The Chairman responded that is a matter for the GC members to consider having received the paper.

11.2.7. AG noted that she has reported on the suggestions sent forward, and has not taken a position on the items in the report. If GC would like to continue to look at this issue, AG suggests a committee is set up to review and prepare recommendations for GC to consider.

11.2.8. The meeting agreed that AG, JSPB and CB will work as a Second Schedule Update Committee to provide recommendations to GC.

11.2.9. A deadline of 31st October 2021 was agreed for any further suggestions for amendments to the schedule with the committee producing a paper for consideration at the GC meeting in February 2022.

11.3. Charity Commission Reports

11.3.1. The Chairman informed the meeting that RSa is unable to attend the meeting, and RSa had suggested that the item of business he put forward regarding Charity Commission reports be deferred to the next meeting so that RSa can speak on the subject. The meeting agreed to defer this business to the next meeting.

11.4. Questions Raised by Phil Northam (PN)

11.4.1. The Chairman informed the Meeting he had received three questions from Phil Northam who is unable to attend the meeting.

11.4.1.1. *Is there an organisational exposition?*

The Chairman confirmed there is various organisational information available on the website including a list of staff under 'About the People' on the NRA website.

The Chairman added that it is worth all GC members reading the annual Trustee Financial Report which also provides information on the Association. The Chairman said he was happy to answer questions on this that GC members may have.

11.4.1.2. **Members seeking to relocate their caravan from Site 6 due to staff parking**

The Secretary General confirmed that the issue of staff parking on/near Site 6 will be dealt with in the coming weeks.

11.4.1.3. **Caravan Development Proposals**

The Chairman informed the meeting that PN has expressed his opposition to the potential development of further caravan sites. The Chairman reported that the NRA is not currently planning any caravan site developments, and noted PN's opposition.

CD added that whilst there are no plans for caravan developments at this time, there is an expectation that a further site may be developed in the future for serviced caravans, and there are vacant sites on other caravan sites to allow caravans to be moved from a site for development.

11.5. Mark Pountain (MP) recorded CCRS's thanks and praise to the NRA and NSC for delivering an excellent Imperial Meeting which saw 126 cadet entries.

No further questions were raised.

12. **G682 – DATES FOR 2022 GENERAL COUNCIL MEETINGS**

12.1. The following dates for General Council meetings in 2022 were approved by consensus:

Saturday 19 th February 2022	2pm	ZOOM Video Conference
Friday 10 th June 2022	3pm	NRA Pavilion
Saturday 17 th September 2022	2pm	ZOOM Video Conference

No further questions were raised.

The meeting closed at 14.55pm



D Lacey
NRA Chairman

Date of next meeting: Saturday 19th February 2022 at 2pm.